

VZCZCXRO3892
PP RUEHDBU
DE RUEHYE #1069 2420511
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 300511Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY YEREVAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6198
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC 0109
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0420

C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 001069

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [KDEM](#) [AM](#)
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION PARTY INTRODUCES BILL TO RECOGNIZE
SEPRATIST NAGORNO KARABAKH

Classified By: CDA R.V. Perina, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (U) Fresh from his stinging defeat in the TEC 15 parliamentary election, on August 28 Heritage Party leader Raffi Hovannisian introduced a bill into parliament which would extend Armenian recognition to the self-declared "Republic of Nagorno Karabagh." To date, no country, including Armenia, has extended recognition to the separatist province, although Armenia provides extensive material support to the entity.

¶2. (U) Heritage MP Stepan Safarian said his party's move was motivated by the continuing deadlock in peace negotiations. National Assembly Speaker Tigran Torossian criticized the proposal as "uninformed," while Prosperous Armenia party secretary commented that unilateral Armenian recognition of

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NK statehood would negate the work of the Minsk Group negotiations. Even the nationalist ARF (Dashnak) party -- Armen Rustamian, foreign affairs committee chair -- criticized the draft bill, disdaining the Heritage proposal as crude political calculation.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: The move has little chance of being enacted or signed by the president, but makes for clever politics. The populist ploy will put the government and ruling party in the position of having to block an initiative that would be very popular among average Armenians, if enacted. Of course, the move is extremely unhelpful from the perspective of Minsk Group negotiations and efforts to resolve the conflict.
PERINA